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A

MEMORIAL

OF

MRS. CLARISSA DAVENPORT RAYMOND,

WHO DIED

AT WILTON, CONN.,

JANUARY 19, 1887,

Aged 104 years, 8 months and 25 days.

PRINTED FOR THE FAMILY.

A. B. DAVENPORT,

GARFIELD BUILDING,

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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[From the STAMFORD ADVOCATE, January 28th, 1887.]

In Memoriam.

Died, in Wilton, Conn., January 19, 1887, Mrs. Clarissa D. Raymond, aged 104 years, 8 months and 25 days.

MRS. RAYMOND, whose maiden name was Clarissa Davenport, was born at Ponus street, in the town of Stamford, Conn., on April 25th, 1782. The house in which she was born stood nearly in front of the present residence of her nephew, Col Darius Davenport. The old building, in which she first saw the light, is still standing, but has been removed to the rear of the yard and is used for various agricultural purposes. This part of Stamford was set off to the town of New Canaan in 1801.

Her father, Deodate Davenport, son of John, whose grandfather was settled over the Congregational church in Stamford from 1697 to 1730, was born January 5, 1730, on Davenport Ridge, about two miles south of the birthplace of Mrs. Raymond. This Ridge has been the seat of the family for over 150 years, and was conveyed by the Stamford minister, by will, to his oldest son John, the father of Deodate, over 50 years before

the birth of our centenarian. The dwelling crowning this Pisgah site is occupied as the summer residence of Dea. A. B. Davenport, of Brooklyn, N. Y.

Clarissa Davenport when a child was sent to school in the village of Stamford, and at that time resided in the family of her father's cousin, Hon. James Davenport, who was the son of Col. Abraham Davenport of that town. In her youth she was a singer, and at the North Stamford church belonged to the choir, then led by Major Seeley who was a person of great consequence, as all choristers then were.

In 1804 she was united in marriage in New Canaan to Samuel Raymond, of Wilton. The newly married couple went to reside in Pound Ridge, N.Y., but soon after removed to the city of New York.

Although but seventeen years old when Gen. Washington—whom she never saw—died, Mrs. Raymond had distinct recollections of the joy with which his election as Chief Ruler was hailed and the sadness that filled all hearts at the tidings of his death. The events of the war of 1812 were as familiar to her mind as the events of our late civil conflict are to us. At that time she was residing with her husband in Hester street, a country lane outside the city limits, where that street now unites with the Bowery. All above this point of her residence was an open country. Just below Canal street was a skating pond.

Her husband, Samuel Raymond, then engaged in business in New York, was sent to practice the drill in anticipation of an attack by the British forces who were on board of their sloops in the East River. The business portion of the city was along the line of the Battery and on the docks; and the fashionable resi-

dences on the lower part of Broadway and fronting Bowling Green. The population of New York city at the time Mrs. Raymond went there to reside was scarcely 100,000. After her husband's death, 73 years ago, Mrs. Raymond returned to Wilton. The passage from New York to Norwalk was made in a sloop, and it took one week. Since that time she has continued to reside in Wilton for the most part of her time with her daughter Clarissa, who married Nathan Comstock in 1824. Mr. Comstock died in 1872. Their son, Mr. John R. Comstock, still resides in Wilton and has one son, Frank Comstock of South Norwalk, and two grandchildren. Five generations have at one time resided under the same roof in the old family mansion in that town.

On the 25th of April, 1882, Mrs. Raymond celebrated her hundredth birthday anniversary. It was on a bright and beautiful spring day, and nearly two hundred friends and relatives from that and the neighboring towns assembled to offer their congratulations. There were her two surviving children, Mrs. Ann Raymond, who has since died, and Mrs. Clarissa Comstock, who is hale and healthy now in her 81st year. Ten of her eighteen grandchildren were present, and fourteen of her great-grandchildren and her two great-great-grandchildren. About one hundred persons sat down, at successive tables, to a sumptuous dinner. Among these were children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews, nieces, grand-nephews, and grand-nieces, and numerous relatives and friends. A blessing was asked on the meal, and after the repast addresses were made by her pastor and others, and a poem read by by her great-grand nephew, Rev. John G. Davenport, now of Waterbury, Conn.

Up to the time of this celebration and for two or three years after, Mrs. Raymond's physical and mental powers were measurably unimpaired. Since her 104th year her eyesight has almost entirely failed, and for the most part of the time she has been confined to her bed. In 1822, now sixty five years ago, Mrs. Raymond became connected with the Congregational church in Wilton, of which she continued an honored member till her death. For the last ten years of her life she has seldom attended church, yet from the window of her parlor she could see the people as they assembled in the house of God or took their departure therefrom. On the first Sabbath in May, after celebrating her hundredth birthday, she attended public worship and stayed to the communion service. During her long life she has seldom had occasion to employ a physician, her health having been uniformly good. Temperate in all things, with a clear conscience, the fear and love of God ruling her life, there were granted to her length of days, and the honor and esteem of all that knew her ; and her end was peace.

At the time of her death, as has long been the cus tom in sparsely settled New England towns, the church bell struck the age of the deceased. Never before had it performed so long a service. Its toll bore to the scattered inhabitants the name of the departed saint. The funeral exercises were held in the afternoon of the 22nd inst. at her late residence. She had particularly requested that her body should not be taken to the church (directly opposite), and that whoever should conduct the services at her funeral should abstain from words of eulogy or praise. About one hundred and fifty relatives and friends were gathered

at the house. (Nearly one-half of these were the direct lineal descendants of the minister who preached under the oak tree at New Haven, Sabbath, April 15th, 1638, and who for thirty years after was pastor of the church in that place). The present supply of the village pulpit, Rev. Dr. Seward, of South Norwalk, conducted the religious exercises. The first of the scriptural selections read, was the wise man's description of a virtuous woman, Prov. 31:10-31. Seldom in modern times has a life run so nearly parallel with the picture there drawn. Then Deut., 34:7, "And Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated." Also 2 Sam., 19: 34, where Barzillai said unto King David, "How long have I to live?" and closing with the words of Him who is the resurrection and the life, and those of the great apostle of the Gentiles. The speaker gave some reminiscences of her life and of the century through which she had passed. Never before had he seen three numerals on the coffin plate marking the years of the deceased. Hers was the age reputed to the apostle John and Polycarp the martyr.

The face of the deceased was most impressive, of marble whiteness, with not a wrinkle on cheek or brow, yet with a sweetness that seemed to speak of the joy and peacefulness with which she had entered into life. It was not a house of mourning, but the celebration of a triumph and a victory.

A. B. D.

[From the SOUTH NORWALK SENTINEL, January 28, 1887.]

A Centenarian.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND FUNERAL SERVICES OF MRS. CLARISSA DAVENPORT RAYMOND.

The funeral of Mrs. Raymond of Wilton, who was nearly one hundred and five years of age, was held on Saturday last, Jan. 22, at the residence of her grandson, John R. Comstock, Esq.

The Rev. D. M. Seward, D.D., acting pastor of the Congregational Church at Wilton, performed the funeral services. He gave a sketch of her life and delivered an address, which presented the prominent lessons of her exceptionally prolonged life. We give the outline and the chief portions of the address.

Mrs. Clarissa Davenport Raymond was born at Stamford, Conn., April 25th, 1782. The part of the town in which she was born now lies within the limits of New Cannan, having been set off near the beginning of this century. She has lived in widowhood more than seventy years. She became a member of the Congregational Church in this place sixty-five years ago. She was seven years old when Washington was inaugurated. She was in womanhood when the Reign of Terror in France prevailed. She lived through the whole period of the rising and shining and setting of the star of Bonaparte. What we learn of her early history must be gained chiefly by tradition. Not a kinsman or friend of her childhood is left to tell the story of her youthful days. Of those with whom she went to the House of God in company, every one has

gone before her ; not a playmate—not a schoolmate is left. From her kindred and from the friends of her mature and later life, we learn quite authentically that she was endowed with a vigorous constitution and enjoyed almost uninterrupted good health, even beyond the beginning of her second century. She was a very firm and loyal patriot in revolutionary times. She had a strong, symmetric, well-poised character ; a retentive memory, a rare power of planning and executing, and a happy faculty of adaptation to changes and new positions. She was easily able in her last years to recite entire hymns and whole chapters of the Word of God. She took bright and cheering views of life through her long pilgrimage, and was patient and hopeful and brave amid the deepening shadows of age. The strongest features of the fine portrait of a virtuous woman in the final chapter of the book of Proverbs well befit her character and life. The stream is so bright and pure as it flows down into the life and vision of the oldest generations of to-day that we are confident it was pure upon the hills where it had its fountain and its early tides among the generations of the last century. She was the mother of seven children, two of whom died in infancy. Of the five who reached maturity, two sons and three daughters, only one survives. Mrs. Raymond leaves one daughter, Mrs. Comstock, who is more than eighty years old ; thirteen grand children, sixteen great grand children, and two great, great grand children.

Statistics have the reputation of being dry, and numerals standing side by side, seem to have no pathos or kindling power. Yet the numerals can be placed where they announce an event that revolutionizes a

household; where they are the measure of a human life. You, a stranger, attend a funeral service, and you see Two! upon the shining plate of the casket. Two years! Ah! there, you say, sleeps a child just out of infancy. Fresh buds of fragrance and beauty were coming out every day; and every day the buds were expanding into blossoms. Alas! the light that already shone over the whole household is suddenly blown out by the rough wind of death.

Again you read Ten! upon the memorial plate. Ten years! The prophecies of brightness and grace and loveliness were constantly unfolding. Imagination was trying her just fledged wings. Memory began laying up her stores. Ah! the bounding pulse is stilled; the tongue that made music all the day, is mute.

Another funeral service and you read Twenty! Twenty years! The figures are a dirge. Those bowed heads beside the bier are the sorrowing father and mother. "How is the strong staff broken and the beautiful rod!"

Again you read Fifty! Fifty years! Manhood in its prime and energy. That weeping group of sons and daughters is fatherless. "His sun is gone down while it is yet day." Fields sown and the harvest ungathered. A symphony of home, whose rich, completing harmonies death arrested and forbade!

So you may read seventy, eighty, in other houses of mourning on the historic tablet. The westering sun! The dimmed eye! The abated force! The full-aged shock of corn! The simple figures tell half the story of the life.

To-day we are summoned into the presence of death. What figures greet our eye, to tell us the length of

this just closed life? Four score! Nay, more than that furthest limit of the ninetieth psalm! Five score? Nay, farther on still. You have heard of the century plant, that after a hundred years of "nothing but leaves" puts forth buds that swell into beautiful blossoms; but here is the plant of a human life that blossomed all the century through and as the second century began, put forth new buds that ripened into fresh blossoms. I have attended hundreds of funerals, but never before have I seen three Arabic numerals on the coffin-plate. Death served his summons upon the young and buoyant and vigorous, ten thousand times, and passed this saint by. Death entered a great multitude of households and called every member away and left this aged pilgrim to stay and multiply her years. But death did not forget her—he was bidden of God to wait and wait. Death came and opened the door, which had become almost a prison door to shut her in. Death came at last and opened the door out of this world, where all must die, into the world which death is forbidden to enter, the world whose inhabitants reverse the order of this life and wax young instead of old. The mortal has just put on immortality.

Let this "good old age" offer us its lessons. We need no living witnesses to prove that this venerable pilgrim through her long life observed the stern laws of health and vigor. Neglect, indulgence, recklessness, dissipation, excess of any kind would have ended this life long before the century was completed. You may judge that she was ignorant of the rules of modern hygienic science and of the latest dietetic habits and courses. Nevertheless, her wise judgment and her firm self-control discovered and pursued the true

methods of physical life. We may well presume that she regarded the care and discipline of the body and the maintenance of health and vigor as a christian duty. This is not intimating that the like care and discretion will carry us over into the second century. But to the incautious and self-indulgent, to the fast-livers, to the sensual and intemperate of every kind; this long and vigorous life delivers the stern message of the gospel, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

This life furnished ample space for the fulfilment of the richest pledges of God's guardianship and unslumbering care. A short life, it is true, can bear strong testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord, can have compacted into its brief years, rapturous hours and rich revelations, Bethels and Horebs.

But think what it is, for God to guard and defend a soul for a hundred years against numberless foes, to keep a soul on so long a voyage from the shipwreck of faith, with so many fierce storms to assault and wrench and beat back and drive her out of her true course, with so many enchanting islands to sail by, where the sirens are singing, where Ulysses must be bound. Here we have a long and unstained record. No Peter-like denial of Christ—no Demas-like collapse into the world is upon it.

Brightly, then, from this life shines out the assurance that the presence and grace of the Lord can relieve and cheer the loneliness of the extremest age. For how can a life, we ask, so prolonged, fail to be lonely at the last! Its pathetic utterance must be, "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me and mine acquaintance into darkness." Every fair thing

loved in childhood has perished, and every friend of youth has gone away. This patient pilgrim might have appropriated the rugged but pithy stanzas of Henry Vaughan :

> " They are all gone into the world of light,
> And I alone sit lingering here.
> Their very memory is fair and bright
> And my sad thoughts doth cheer.
>
> I see them walking in an air of glory
> Whose light doth trample on my days ;
> My days, which are at best but dull and hoary
> Mere glimmerings and decays."

Yet she did not call her years few and evil, as did the faint-hearted Jacob, nor did she abhor life as did broken-spirited Job. God peopled her solitude and illumined the twilight of her hoary age with prophetic songs. Christ gave her faith-visions of the home in the Father's house, which through many years He was preparing for her.

This life covers a period of the deepest significance in the history of the world. No century since humanity began its career has proved the theater of such rapid progress, such wide changes, such revolutionary events. From Puritan simplicity to Greek refinement ! From the weak infancy of the nation just shaking off the yoke of monarchy to its manhood-strength of territory and numbers ! Only run over the different departments of a ripe civilization and think of the swift advance and the mature achievements in every one of them within the boundaries of this one life. The sciences (some new ones created), the fine arts (from roughness to exquisite skill) ; inventions, discoveries, motors, roads, travel, communication, architecture, literature, philosophy, history, charities, evangelization !

Wildernesses populated! cataracts spanned! oceans bridged! mountains tunneled! The ends of the earth brought together! The earth encircled with bands of lightning! Forms of government changed! Nations built up and disintegrated! Prophecies fulfilled! The evangel of Christ penetrating the heart of pagandom! Through these upheavals, these giant strides of progress, these epochs and eras in all nations of the earth, this venerable life has had its course. What sharp, world-wide contrasts in every realm of human life passed before her vision from youth to age! Anna the prophetess, John the evangelist, and Polycarp the martyr, whose lives matched hers in length, did not behold such marvelous transformations, such mighty achievements as were wrought in the century of her life.

At last the heavenly summons came and God has taken her to His closer presence, We are often saddened with the mystery of early departure. But if there is any mystery here, it is the mystery of detention. For here it would seem that the shadow on the sun-dial must have been put backward more than ten degrees. Now comes the word of the prophet to this final scene—"Weep not for the dead." Thousands on earth have watched the endurance of this slowly-ebbing life and they may well bless God for her release and her ascension to the skies. Hosts of kindred and friends have waited for her coming and with fresh songs of thankfulness, they will give her joy, that her warfare is accomplished and her crown is won.

The final term of weakness and infirmity, when she was waiting for the day to dawn and the shadows to

flee away will seem to her but a moment amid the glories of the holy city.

Let us bless God in song and in prayer, that her long life closed gently and peacefully. When she was a child, loving arms enfolded her and loving hearts as with angel guardianship shielded and kept her. When, after a whole century, she was a child again, other loving and loyal hearts, with unceasing vigil and skillful ministries, attended her with filial tenderness to the very verge of the world of light and gladness.

May God make those to whom an early summons is on the way, fearless conquerors of death. May the Lord gird with patience and courage those who are destined to ripe old age.

"There comes a time when laughing spring
And golden summer cease to be;
And we put on the autumn robe,
To tread the last declivity;
Yet bright the slope
With rosy hope,
Beyond the sunset we behold
Another dawn with fairer light,
While watchers whisper through the night
We shall be young who now are old."

The musical services were rendered in an impressive manner by Mrs. Price, Messrs Hoyt and Warren, who are associated with Frank Comstock in the choral performances of the M. E. Church of Norwalk, and who sang—"Nearer, my God, to Thee" and "I'm wandering, slowly wandering."

After viewing the remains the company gradually dispersed, and the family were left alone with their beloved dead.

The Commitment service was held in the house on the following noon, a bright spring like day. In the stillness of that Sabbath loved ones who had so long and tenderly cared for her, bore her remains to their last resting place on the hillside, feeling that the halo of her patient Christian example had fallen like a benediction on her descendants.

LINES,

ADDRESSED TO MRS. CLARISSA DAVENPORT RAYMOND, OF WILTON, CONN., ON REACHING THE AGE OF 103 YEARS, APRIL 25TH, 1885.

The three years child, upon its mother's knee
Looks on a world divine with mystery.
Forests and fields, sunshine and clouds and rain
Wondering he looks at through the window pane.
These are yet glorious to his mind ; till he
Loses the wisdom of his infancy.
Soon in the stir and stress of life are lost
The first child feelings. And we vainly boast
Of things attained—power and wealth and fame.
Life makes us wild, but age will make us tame.
And thou hast come through childhood and through age,
And both have given to thee a heritage
Of memory and hope that doth not fail.
May this remain to thee while in the vale
Thou lingerest till the hour of heavenly birth
Relieves thee of the griefs that are of earth.

W. E. DAVENPORT.

Brooklyn, N.Y., April 25, 1885.

LINES

WRITTEN AFTER HAVING PAID A VISIT TO MRS. CLARISSA DAVENPORT RAYMOND,

Who had recently passed her One hundred and fourth birthday.

She sat and talked of other days
The days of many years ago,
Of acts, and actors, on life's stage,
Who've long since passed from earthly gaze,
Yet dear to those who're left below.

And as she, with unceasing flow,
Recounted bygones strangely fast,
I thought what volumes she must know,
What crowds of scenes must come and go,
As age like hers recalls the past.

And such a past! Such years on years!
I wondered was she ever young!
Did she begin with baby tears
To learn Life's mingled joys and fears?
Or were her songs of youth unsung?

I wondered if the God of Earth,
And Prince of Heaven, on mighty throne,
Had e'en forgot her time of birth,
Or failed to send his mandate forth
To call his ancient wand'rer home.

To live so long seems weird and drear,
It savors of a race gone by;
Or people of some other sphere,
Who find our world, and linger here
E'en till their stream of life runs dry.

We're taught that three score years and ten
Are given to man, perchance four score,
But here, a worthy widowed dame,
Of gentle mien, and modest fame,
Had numbered five score years and four.

And she had memory, health and peace,
  Hers seemed a life of mild content,
Of quiet waiting for release,
Till gently, hold on earth should cease,
  And Heaven and Life be sweetly blent.

It seemed as if old Reaper Time
  Had touched her lightly in his flight;
God's sun-rays surely tinged her prime
And even now did softly shine
  Through this, her latter, peaceful night.

Her bark seemed moored in waters fair,
  Nearest of kin were at her side
To tend her needs with loving care:
And thus, in heaven-born quiet there,
  We left her in the ebbing tide.

And now I'm thinking of the day
  When we'll beyond the border stand:
We'll meet again—'tis safe to say—
But only in a spirit way,
  In God's own bright and happy land.

Mrs. Wm. B. Davenport.

Brooklyn, N.Y., July 14th, 1886.

"Who, who would live alway, away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns?—

Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet,
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

A SONNET,

To the Memory of Mrs. Clarissa D. Raymond.

Lo, the brief meteor flashes o'er the sky !
So swiftly Genius flares its sudden light,
And sinks as quick, like comet in his flight.
The Hero, drawn by glory's sun, mounts high—
The trail of war precedes, then follows nigh—
But soon the blood-red vision fades from sight.
Statesmen, like varying planets, now glow bright
When near the popular sun, now pale and die
In changing season. But thy gentle soul,
Like a clear, steadfast star about the pole,
With pure light, serene, undimmed by fears,
In thy small circle held by power divine,
In beauty of a constant faith didst shine
Thy Saints-rest of a hundred love-lit years.

James Pierpont Davenport.

Brooklyn, N.Y., Feb. 22, 1887.

" And she who with her Leader,
Has conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever,
Is clad in robes of white.
Oh, land that see'st no sorrow !
Oh, state that fearest no strife !
Oh, royal land of flowers !
Oh, realm and home of life !"